



MSHA's Accident Prevention Program Miner's Tip

**Safety and
Health are
Values!**

Ask Someone Who Knows

Category : General Safety

Mine Type: All Mines

When a machine breaks down, it is common practice to reassign the operator to another job while the repairs are being made. Although, it makes perfect sense for productivity and the maximum use of assets, it may be beneficial to keep the operator around, at least while the maintenance people do the initial troubleshooting. Over time, the operator develops a feel for the machine that can't be measured on meters or gauges.

This was evidenced recently at a stock pile when a dozer operator moved material away from a feeder opening to place a plate over the opening prior to work being done on the feeder. The operator told the maintenance workers that he didn't think the pile was stable. The maintenance workers looked the situation over and decided that the equipment operator was either overcautious or mistaken. When the plate was placed on the opening, a portion of the pile slipped and covered one the workers, who suffocated before his fellow employees could reach him.



When the safety of a task is in any way questionable, the best opinion is generally from the person most familiar with the work and area. An operator who works around a machine usually can tell by sight, sound, or even smell if everything is right or wrong. Regardless of which sense is used, he can feel that something is just not quite right. If your life depends on something, you might be well advised to consider a hunch from someone who knows the ins and outs of the job.

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